

37.

---

# PRISON LIFE!

---

“Are we free? go ask the question  
In the cells of Lafayette;  
Ask it of your chain-girt brothers  
Shut within its parapet;  
Ask it of the silent journals,  
Crushed beneath an iron hand;  
Ask it of the mighty armies  
Quartered on a groaning land.  
To them let the question be,  
Friends and brothers! are we free?”

---

BY

JOHN M. BREWER,

LATE READING CLERK OF MARYLAND SENATE,

OF 1860 AND 1861.

AND STILL LATER OF FORTS LAFAYETTE AND WARREN.

---

# TO THE LEGISLATURE OF 1860 & 1861.

---

AN OFFICER OF THAT BODY

I DEDICATE TO

THE LEGISLATURE OF 1860 & 1861,

THE LAST FREE LEGISLATURE OF THE FREE STATE OF  
MARYLAND,

THIS BRIEF, SIMPLE,

AND

TRUTHFUL NARRATIVE

OF

“PRISON LIFE.”

# PRISON LIFE.

---

"But that I am forbid

To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul."

---

The Legislature of Maryland by joint resolution adjourned to meet in the City of Frederick, September 17th, 1861.

The author of this brief narrative of Prison Life in Government prisons was the Reading Clerk of the Maryland Senate. The office which he held clearly indicated his duties. The writer, in common with other citizens of Maryland who were attracted to the temporary capital of the State by the momentous questions to be discussed by the Maryland Legislature, availed himself of what he then believed and still believes to be the unquestioned prerogative of every freeman—the right to express his convictions of public duty.

Having this perception of political right, the writer of this did not hesitate freely to exchange opinion with citizens of Frederick, and gentlemen from other sections of the State, doubtless drawn there by the magnitude of the questions to be discussed in the Legislature, and upon whose deliberations the destiny of their State was in a measure to be decided.

Believing at that time, as he still believes, that the old Union was hopelessly destroyed, the writer, a citizen born, reared and educated in Maryland, necessarily felt some interest in the future political affiliation which his State might form.

When, during the summer of 1861, it became manifest from the repeated acts of tyranny on the part of the General Government, that Maryland had ceased to exist as a State, but was considered only a mere province of the Federal Government. The last *free* Legislature elected by the freemen of the former State of Maryland, through the Committee on Federal Relations, made a Report on the condition of the State, which will be read and admired as long as the English language exists. After they had eloquently and truthfully portrayed, and indignantly protested against the wrongs and outrages heaped upon a brave, spirited, but helpless State, they adjourned to meet on the 17th of September, 1861.

Unfinished business required the meeting in September, and I, as one of their officers, had the credulity to believe that the last free Legislature of Maryland would be suffered to meet, transact their business, and adjourn, in accordance with parliamentary rules and usages. On the 12th September, 1861, when the delegation from Baltimore City was arrested, the writer still thought that the Legislature would be allowed to meet on the 17th, organize and adjourn, but even that small boon was denied—the rulers of the State as if determined to show their utter disregard and total defiance of popular rights, arrested every member who had the manliness to assemble in Frederick, in obedience to the trust reposed in him by his constituents. Not satisfied with the exhibition of gallantry and bravery manifested by arresting some 17 unarmed members, elate and flushed with their great achievement, as there might be some lingering vestiges of disloyalty left, they decided to arrest the officers of Senate and House,—and even give the subalterns 24 hours imprisonment to teach them a wholesome fear of the mildest and most beneficent government on earth, and after a short imprisonment to brand them with the Government stamp and then turn them out like their other cattle, not, however, to graze in Government pastures; those fields were only to be cropped by loyal beasts. But the stamp was to be imposed in mere wantonness, to manifest to us the alteration in our political condition, that we were no longer freemen, of a once free State, but citizens of a conquered Province.

After my arrest, on the evening of 17th September, 1861, at my room in the United States Hotel, I was conducted to the camp, about a mile from Frederick. I there found the members of the House who had the audacity to vote for the adoption of the Report and Resolutions of the Committee on Federal Relations, reported and adopted at the preceding session of the Legislature. All the officers of both Senate and House, who were in Frederick, I found also at the camp. We were there detained until near dark, when we were removed to the Frederick Barracks, and confined in the second story.

The room in which we were confined was a large one, and a guard of from five to ten men walked the room in which we were confined during the night. The guard belonged to the Wisconsin Regiment, and were Americans of foreign descent, the language of Milton and Shakespeare being to them an unknown tongue, they consequently could not be corrupted, as they could not comprehend some of the maledictions and disloyal truths which were uttered by the imprisoned rebels.

On the morning of the 18th, the loyal citizens of the town of Frederick assembled on the lot, on which the barracks are situated, for the purpose of getting a glimpse of the prisoners that were captured on the preceding day. When a sight was obtain-

ed of some of the prisoners, who were citizens of the town and county, a deafening cheer was given, and loud exultations indulged in, doubtless at the valor and strategy manifested by the military on the preceding day in their successful capture.

About 12 o'clock in the day the prisoners were waited on by General Edward Shriver, of Frederick, who informed the citizens of the county and town who were in custody, and also the officers of the House and Senate, that they would be released upon taking the oath of allegiance, but that the members would be removed to some point to be fixed upon by Government.

As I had never read the oath that was to be imposed, I necessarily felt some solicitude about the nature of the obligation which I was required to assume. When I was conducted by the guard to the Star chamber where the test was to be administered—I looked with some interest at the persons assembled there to witness the new birth and regeneration of rebels; men who had been disloyal, but who were to be made by the new Government invention, loyal.

I recognized General Edward Shriver and Colonel William P. Maulsby, who seemed to be complacently supervising the operation of the Government machine, by which Southern men were to be transformed into Lincoln minions.

A paper was handed me by a man, whom I was afterwards informed was a Wisconsin Colonel, he stated to me that I would be required to agree to the contents of that paper—I read it with care, for I am frank to admit that I had no desire to explore the secrets of the Government Bastiles, inasmuch too, as I had a young and helpless family totally dependent upon me for support, I was not Quixotic enough to run a tilt with Government, but was prepared to yield to a power which I could not resist.

When, however, I read the paper which I was required to sign, I was startled "in limine." I was required to swear that I took the oath freely and voluntarily. I will use no set phrases and courtly expressions, but will characterize the obligation which the Government sought to impose upon me, as a "monstrous lie," and that in assuming such an obligation I would have committed wilful and deliberate perjury.

Inheriting freedom as a birthright, I promptly and positively refused.

The Wisconsin Colonel upon my refusal desired that I should be withdrawn; I asked the privilege of penning a few lines to my wife in Baltimore, which was accorded to me, with the understanding that my letter was to be inspected and supervised by the authorities who procured my arrest and then had me in charge. I wrote to my wife, recounting my arrest and telling

her the surveillance under which, in future, our correspondence was to be conducted. General Shriver kindly offered to see that the letter I had written should be transmitted.

I was reconducted to my fellow prisoners, and notice was then given that we were to prepare to leave Frederick. Language cannot do justice to our departure. To each prisoner two guards were assigned to conduct us to the cars—while being conducted to the cars the City of Frederick was radiant with flags, indeed Lovejoy could not have rested his eye upon a more delightful scene, the sight was a realization of his wildest Abolition dreams,

“Black spirits and white,  
Red spirits and grey,  
Mingle, mingle, mingle,  
You that mingle may.”

Jeers, exultations, maledictions, all heaped by the valiant loyal citizens of the town upon some 17 or 18 unarmed members of the Legislature. This loyal mob, which were cheering at the disgrace which the Abolition Government was striving to place upon the free representatives of a free people of a once free State, could not have been more jubilant and exultant if we had been captured on some well fought and well contested field; indeed the whole proceeding attendant upon our departure from Frederick can only be characterized as an “Abolition carnival.”

And yet it was this same mob whom an Ohio Senator said deterred the Legislature of 1861 from passing an ordinance of secession—material like that are never dangerous; none of that crowd will ever hear the ring of the rifle, they are only heroes on such bloodless fields in which some 17 unarmed men are to be captured.

“The fickle crowd with eager zeal,  
Huzza each turn of fortunes wheel,  
And loudest shout, when lowest lie,  
Exalted worth and station high.”

We reached the cars and were seated, two soldiers were assigned to each member. At every stopping place we were ordered out by Captain Bertram, a Wisconsin officer, who had us in charge, the roll was called to see that all of his prisoners were present. This was repeated at every station until we reached the Relay House, there, for what reason I have never known, we were marched to a camp about a mile from the Relay; we were there welcomed with vociferous huzzas, Captain Bertram pointed to his prisoners, and again there was a deafening shout; Bertram in pointing us out to the admiring soldiery could, in the words of the Roman Poet, exclaim, “*si quæris monumenta circumspice*,” we doubtless were their first captives; we can therefore pardon their exuberant manifestation of feeling.

We were then marched again to the Relay, and then officially informed by officer Bertram that we could eat our suppers provided we paid for them.

Mrs. Lowe, the proprietress, kindly prepared us supper, but refused to take any compensation.

About an hour after supper we were placed in the cars, and reached Annapolis between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, where we were placed on the steamboat *Baltimore*, anchored opposite the naval school at Annapolis, there we found on the vessel Col. J. J. Heckart, of the Maryland Senate, Messrs. Dennis, Maxwell, Raisin and Landing, of the House of Delegates, and Messrs. J. H. Maddox and Thomas Maddox, gentleman from St. Mary's County, Maryland. We were placed in the custody of a Lieutenant of Marines. The next night Mr. Kilbourn, Speaker of the House, was brought on board; the next day, through the intervention of friends I presume, Messrs. Dennis and Maccubin, of the House of Delegates, were released.

On Saturday between eleven and twelve o'clock at night, being the 21st of September, 1861, the boat left Annapolis for the purpose of taking us to Fort Lafayette. No incident worthy of narration transpired during our voyage. On Monday evening about ten o'clock Fort Lafayette with its gloomy and forbidding presence loomed upon our vision—all of the prisoners congregated in that part of the vessel, which afforded the best view of the Fortress, that they were soon to occupy. When our eyes became sufficiently accustomed to the darkness to see the gloomy structure, involuntarily there was an universal expression of indignation and surprise. "Heaven! says Raisin, my County Jail is a palace to such a place." "Is it possible that freemen are to be huddled together in such an infernal hole," adds Maxwell. But remonstrances were useless; we were arrested from whim, and were to be retained in prison and released only when it suited the whim and caprice of our rulers.

After the boat landed we were taken in charge by Lieutenant Wood, of Fort Lafayette, the baggage of each prisoner was thoroughly searched, and we were required to deliver up what money we had with us.

We were then assigned a large room with stone floor; in which were five large cannon, 32-pounders; doubtless to assure us of our security. Iron stretchers, with straw mattress and blanket was furnished us to sleep on, lights were required to be put out and all conversation was required to cease. Our novel situation affected us all differently; some were inclined to converse, but the surly guards near our prison bars required us to stop; others, who doubtless felt that they had ended a long and tedious journey, found relief in sleep—never was I so convinced of the truth of the remark of Sancho Panza, "blessed is the man that invented sleep."

I confess I envied those of my companions who could get to sleep without difficulty ; the night was to me the most unpleasant part of my imprisonment—required to retire at 9 o'clock—I lay for hours and listened to the tramp of the sentinel near my window, then the breathing of my fellow prisoners, showing that though debarred of liberty, yet they were enjoying more tranquil slumbers than could ever visit the eyelids of their persecutors and oppressors.

On the next day, which was the 24th of September, 1861, as our room door was open, I was up and dressed and anxious to take a view by daylight of our prison and our future bounds.

The first person I recognized on the opposite side of the court was Col. George P. Kane ; the recognition was mutual, and I hastened to cross the court to welcome him. The sentry arrested me in passing over, and in language more emphatic than polite informed me that I could not pass. Col. Kane directed me the route I was to take to meet him.

As he was the oldest inhabitant of the Fort, I knew from his long confinement that he was thoroughly familiar with prison laws, and would be a valuable counsel to consult on commencing the new and unexpected career on which I was entering. Willing to enlighten my ignorance, he told me that the room we occupied the night before had never been tenanted, and that the prisoners had never been allowed to visit that side of the Fort, but presumed, as the room was to be now occupied by us, the bounds would be extended to our room.

As my recent sea voyage had whetted my appetite, I next inquired, not without interest, about the eating department—I was told that there was a mess, who by paying seven dollars a week per prisoner had two meals a day prepared for them ; that the person who furnished the mess drew the ration of each prisoner ; that those who were unable or unwilling to incur the expense could take their meals at the United States Hotel. I determined to patronize that Hotel, though the fare furnished at that Boarding House was not as savory and well served as at the mess, yet it was more in accordance with the condition of my pocket-book. I waited with some impatience and some interest the announcement of breakfast at the United States, which Colonel Kane told me would soon be made. When the announcement was formally made by a soldier, "breakfast at the United States," other prisoners who had been doubtless as myself waiting with impatience the summons to breakfast joined in the chorus quite lustily, and soon the fort re-echoed with shouts "Breakfast at the United States, Breakfast at the United States." The morning meal being ushered in with such noisy demonstrations of joy, I had some misgivings whether the Federal breakfast, of which I was about to partake, would justify the noisy rejoicings with which it was heralded. In company



with some thirty or forty prisoners I entered the room where we were to take our morning meal. Our breakfast saloon was a room about the size of the apartment I had occupied the previous night. The furniture was plain and simple—a brick floor, a long pine table, judging from its appearance the table had never been soiled with much water, a smaller pine table, running at right angles with the longer one, and rough benches on each side of the tables.

Thinking there might be some choice in a seat, I hesitated a moment, but a short survey satisfied me that there was no choice to be exercised. I seated myself in front of a tin plate, knife and fork, and a tin cup with some discolored beverage, dignified with the name of coffee, a piece of fat pork, sometimes raw and sometimes half-cooked, coarse bread cut in large thick slices—if one slice was not sufficient, and an application made for another, a second slice was then adroitly and gracefully slid to you down the table, which in its passage collected the scraps and refuse, which at that stage of the meal had plentifully accumulated.

The privateers, with whom we were not allowed to communicate, were seated at the smaller table, irons round their ankles, well guarded, and supplied with the same fare as was furnished the other guests of the Hotel. This tempting meal being finished, cups and plates were removed, and the table swept down with the same straw broom, which was used for sweeping out our breakfast room. This was my first breakfast at Fort Lafayette, and the rest were like unto it.

After breakfast we were notified by the guard that we could walk for an hour up and down the small enclosure of ground within the fort. As the promenade on the ground was an exchange from the flag stone in front of our room, I gladly availed myself of that privilege. When the hour was up we were duly notified, and required to withdraw to the flag pavement in front of our quarters.

We were informed that we could have the privilege of communicating by letter with our friends outside the Fort, under certain restrictions, what the specific restrictions were I never clearly understood. I know that one communication of importance, addressed to my brother, enclosing a draft to be by him collected and paid over to my wife, was retained for several weeks, and the letter with the draft was returned to me with a short note from the Assistant Secretary of State, stating that the letter to my brother was disloyal in the extreme, and that when a proper letter was written by me, the letter and draft would be forwarded. Hence it is that I never clearly understood, what the specific restrictions were, that was to guide and govern our correspondence. As I previously stated, I had to yield to a power, I could not resist, I therefore determined,

when placed in Fort Layette, whatever opinions I might entertain upon the injustice of my arrest and imprisonment, to conform as far as I was able, to all the rules for the government of the prison, convinced from the manner and character of our arrest, the fruitlessness of pursuing any other course of conduct.

The same day I was being conducted outside the enclosure of the Fort, while looking across the narrow stream which separated Fort Lafayette from the opposite Fort, I enquired of the sentry, who was accompanying me, the occupant of a handsome house on the opposite bank, "Mrs. Gelston lives there Sir, a lady that has been very kind to the Gentlemen confined in the Fort," and then added, "it is against the rules, no soldier is allowed to talk or hold any conversation with a prisoner," I thanked him that he informed me of the rule, to which I took care in future to conform. This occurrence happened the first day of my imprisonment, it was the first kind and civil answer, that I received, while in Fort Lafayette, and I think I can safely say it was the last, I received while an inmate of that Fortress. About 12 o'clock of the same day (the 24th of September 1861) dinner at the United States Hotel was heralded with the same noisy demonstration of joy, that had characterized the announcement of breakfast. Though I had not an elegant sufficiency at breakfast, I however did not rush with the same alacrity to dinner, as at the morning meal.

When leisurely and not at all elate with the prospect of feasting on such a meal, as I have read, used to garnish the table of Lucullus, prepared for lenten fare, I seated myself at the table, the same tin plate, cup, knife and fork greeted me; but the same barren scene that I had gazed on at my morning's meal was again presented to my vision. I was not diverted from my dinner by the sight of vegetables, and as to desert, it was among the things that were. A piece of half cooked fat pork, a thick chunk of bread, a second chunk conveyed to the applicant, who "like Oliver asked for more" by the same quoit-like process, that I indicated in the matinal meal. Bean soup was added to our dinner, but I would have defied Dr. Kane or the most zealous explorers in Artic or Torrid regions, after the most thorough search and the most minute analysis, to detect the ghost of a bean. I examined the cup, in which my soup was placed, from circumference to centre, I explored with spoon the height and dimension of my bowl of soup, but in vain. After a prolonged, patient and anxious search, my labours were fruitless, no bean was to be found.

I assure my readers that whatever my feelings of indignation and excitement may be against the administration, yet I would not wilfully exaggerate the quantity and quality of the fare with which we were supplied.

My narrative is entitled "Prison Life" and I shall in conformity

with its title, only endeavor to give a clear, unvarnished and simple narrative of the time I spent in Government Forts. I would not knowingly or wilfully swerve from the strict line of truth, even against a President, whose election I opposed and whose Administration I have since learned to despise and detest.

Dinner was the last meal and we were then to remain contented until the next morning. About five o'clock in the afternoon, the soldiers were carried through the manual, by an Orderly Sergeant, their arms and accoutrements examined and inspected. At six o'clock we repaired to our rooms and were locked in for the night, two candles were allowed our mess, at nine o'clock, tattoo was beaten, which was the notice that lights were to be put out, and all further conversation was to cease. As I before said, this time was to me the most unpleasant portion of the twenty-four hours.

This is I think a truthful and faithful account of the first day I spent in Fort Lafayette, and every day was like unto it, the monotony only diversified by the arrival and departure of prisoners.

About a week after my arrival, Mr. Brown the Mayor of Baltimore, Mr. May the Congressman, Baltimore, the members of the House of Delegates from Baltimore City, together with Mr. Hall and Mr. Howard both Editors of daily papers in the City; Dr. Lynch the Baltimore County Senator and Messrs. Dennison and Quinlan members of the House from Baltimore County, constituted the new arrivals from Fortress Monroe where they had been confined from the 13th of September, 1861. The gentlemen I have just named reached Fort Lafayette between the hours of four and five in the afternoon, the balance of the evening, until time to close the doors, was taken up in assigning quarters to the new arrivals.

What with the daily arrivals and the large increase that afternoon, our quarters began to be uncomfortably packed. My bed was next to a window protected by iron bars; with little or no space intervening, was a bed occupied by Mr. Gordon of Allegany County, next Mr. May, the Messrs. Maddoxes of St. Mary's County, Lieutenant Butt of the Confederate Navy, Mr. Dennison of Baltimore County and Mr. Hall, Editor of the South. Those gentlemen were my immediate and nearest companions, during the night. Political prisoners were brought in almost daily; the room which I occupied now numbered thirty five, I thought its capacity was tested to the utmost.

We were able to distinguish a visitor to the Fort, from a prisoner, in this way, a visitor always went to the Commandant's room unattended, a prisoner was always honored with a guard. After the interest upon the arrival of a new face, had somewhat subsided, the prisoners would begin to speculate among themselves, in what room the new arrival would be quartered. One

acquaintance who slept near me, would sometimes, upon the entrance of a new prisoner say, I wonder which room, they will assign to him, they cannot put him in our room as there are already thirty-five, and it is not possible to put more there. Says another gentleman he cannot be assigned to our room as now it is almost absolutely impossible to turn. Says a Virginian, he cannot be put in our room, as there are already forty-five. Notwithstanding all this, room was found or at least made to accommodate every guest, whom the Secretary of State and his detectives thought worthy to be honored with a place in the Government Forts.

When a prisoner was brought in the Fort, he was conducted to the office of Lieutenant Wood, searched and then turned into the enclosure with the other prisoners. The reader may imagine the singular feelings, which a new prisoner would experience upon witnessing, what at that time, was to him a novel spectacle; but which after a time becomes to him usual and customary. The prisoners would cluster around a new arrival, ply him with questions, as to where he hailed from? What caused his arrest? The uniform and invariable answer to the last question was, I do not know. Among all the political prisoners, with whom I conversed in Forts Lafayette and Warren, I never talked with one, who knew with what he was charged and in what he had offended. While the new prisoner was thus being examined by his fellow captives, dinner would perhaps be announced at the United States, the new prisoner would naturally feel anxious to see what kind of table, Uncle Sam was in the habit of setting for his boarders. Upon seeing the table, if the new prisoner had any means at all, he would be very apt to go into the mess at seven dollars per week.

Among the political prisoners was Mr. Leonard Quinlan a member of the House of Delegates from Baltimore County.—Mr. Quinlan was sixty years of age and was an invalid during the whole period of his imprisonment, at length his sickness assumed so serious a character, that all of his fellow prisoners, became alarmed about his condition and advised him to enter into any obligation, which the Government might impose rather than remain in Fort Lafayette, where he could not receive the attentions, which were absolutely necessary for his life; as it was the opinion of Dr. McGill and other physicians at the Fort that a prolonged imprisonment would be attended with fatal results.

A communication was addressed to the State Department at Washington, by Doctors McGill, Mills and the physician of the Fort, with reference to the condition of Mr. Quinlan, reiterating the opinion previously expressed by them as to the continuance of his longer confinement.

Mr. Quinlan in his weak and delicate condition agreed to take

the oath of allegiance, or assume any obligation which the Government might think proper to impose upon a gentleman of over sixty years of age, and in failing health at that. A letter was received from the State Department in the month of October, authorizing the release of Mr. Quinlan, stipulating, however, that he should take the oath of allegiance, and that he should not return to the State of Maryland, which was his home, until such time as fixed upon by Government. As a release of such a character, and coupled with such a condition, that is, not to have the privilege of rejoining his family, and of being nursed and attended by them, was no release, Mr. Quinlan very properly concluded to remain with his friends, linger, and if it should be his fate, die in a Fort erected for the defence of New York, but metamorphosed by the infamous Government at Washington, into a prison for the confinement of "freemen." This offer to release Mr. Quinlan was a mere mockery, and he still remained an occupant of the Fort notwithstanding the delicate and highly critical condition of his health.

On the second Sabbath of my arrival, Mr. William G. Harrison, of Baltimore, and Lieutenant Stevens, of the Navy of the Confederate States, proposed that the Episcopal service should be read in the room I occupied, it being one of the largest rooms in the Fort. Mr. George Landing, a member of the Legislature from Worcester County, and a guest of the United States Hotel, participated in the service. Mr. L. had a fine voice, and as leader of the choir he became indispensable in the performance of the service.

While the last hymn, which concluded the service, was being sung, dinner was announced at the United States in the same noisy way, which always characterized the announcement of that meal.

When I entered the dining-room I was surprized and pleased to find on the plate of each prisoner three fine large mealy Irish potatoes, it is unnecessary to describe the gusto which they were eaten. Mr. Landing, who was singing the last hymn, generally occupied the next seat to me—Mr. Kessler, from Frederick County, after dispatching his potatoes, could not resist the sight of Landing's three. Kessler expressed his fears that Landing in the fervour of his devotions, would not think of his dinner, and therefore he would eat the potatoes himself. Kessler had nearly finished Landing's last potatoe, when who should enter the room but Landing. When he saw the skins of the potatoes his countenance was radiant with pleasure; "nothing I like better than Irish potatoes;" but alas, what a change was produced in his countenance when he found that there was no potatoes for him. To his position, as leader of the choir, he was to ascribe this loss of his potatoes. Landing reproached Kessler in no mild terms for his foraging propensities. I very much

fear that the loss of the potatoes neutralized the good effects of the sermon. It taught Landing, however, a lesson in punctuality, and on no future Sabbath did he ever allow his office as chorister to interfere with a prompt and early attendance at dinner.

The Sabbath before the last that we were removed from Fort Lafayette, we were visited by Mr. Simeon Draper, and Mr. Murray, Marshal of the United States for New York. The purpose of their visit, as I was informed, was to examine and see whether the reports that had been published in some of the Northern papers, relative to our accommodations and fare, was correct. They examined our quarters, and as they happened in while the prisoners of the United States were at dinner, they had an opportunity of judging whether an exaggerated account had been given or not. They visited us on Sunday, the day on which potatoes were furnished; they examined with some curiosity and interest the mixture called coffee, and though urged by the prisoners, in order to satisfy themselves of its quality, to drink it, they respectfully declined, expressing themselves satisfied that it was an unfit beverage; I add, even for rebels. The Marshal informed us that he would make arrangements to promote our future comfort, assuring us on leaving that our future meals should be better cooked and better served.

About the latter part of October, 1861, about three or four days before we were removed to Fort Warren, our room was roused by the report that a prisoner in the next room had made his escape through the window, and had succeeded, though only partially clad, in reaching the water. The prisoner had a life preserver, and was preparing to make the plunge when the alarm was given, and he was recaptured. The prisoners in the Fort were all roused, the rooms visited, roll called, and every means taken by the Commandant of the Fort to assure himself that none of his prisoners had escaped. Mr. Lowber was the name of the gentleman who had made the attempt to escape. He was from New Orleans; born at the North, yet he had for thirty years been a citizen of the State of Louisiana, he had been arrested and brought to Fort Lafayette, while endeavoring to make his way to New Orleans. Mr. Lowber seemed to chafe and fret under his confinement, as he was a man of active mind and active pursuits.

After the recapture of Lowber, he was consigned to the Guard House, and there kept until we were removed to Fort Warren.

Mr. Lowber afterwards told me, that while an inmate of the Guard House, the rules for the guidance of the soldiers were there written and set up. One of the rules forbid any soldier from holding any conversation with a prisoner, and that when it become necessary to talk with a prisoner, the soldier was required to communicate with him in the rudest and coarsest language.

This, Mr. Lowber informed me, was one among the many Draconic rules which were in the Guard House, and which was to control the intercourse between the soldiers and the prisoners.

This rule, adopted for communication between soldiers and prisoners, was confirmatory of my first day's experience at Fort Lafayette, when the sentry informed me that he was not allowed to communicate with me. Fortunately the United States Government happened to be represented by a sentry who was a gentleman, or else I should not have received so civil an answer.

As I before said, Mr. Lowber was kept in close confinement in the Guard House until the period when we were to be removed from Fort Lafayette to Fort Warren. Owing to the active interference of Mr. Brown, the Mayor of Baltimore, a bed was furnished to Mr. Lowber during his confinement in the Guard House.

I will not attempt an eulogy on a gentleman to whom I am fearful I could not do justice, but with reference to eulogy, there could not be a more fit and appropriate subject than George William Brown, the former Mayor of Baltimore City—knowing his antecedents as the descendant and representative of one of the richest and most successful mercantile firms in the city—a house that enjoyed a foreign character—himself a lawyer of high reputation and unblemished honor, in a word, a man that had all the qualifications requisite to fit him for Chief Magistrate of the third most populous city of the old Union, and a gentleman too whom the free citizens of the then free City of Baltimore had, with almost singular unanimity, elected to the mayoralty of his native city. This gentleman, mild, unassuming and good, always ready to interfere and interpose to contribute aid to a sick, aged and unfortunate prisoner; without meaning to be invidious, and not wishing to overlook the many other noblemen of nature there confined, I cannot refrain from this feeble attempt to do inadequate justice to George William Brown, the last Mayor of the free City of Baltimore.

I would not have in this narrative indulged in a digression with reference to Mr. Brown, were he at this time a recipient of municipal honors, but I have attempted in a plain, earnest and sincere way to pay a fitting tribute to the citizen called from retirement, and who during the short career in which he was able to exhibit his Administrative abilities, showed that he was in every respect worthy of the position which he filled as Mayor of a free city.

Previous to our removal from Fort Lafayette, Mr. James Haig, of Baltimore City, began to give evidence of derangement of mind—the attention of Lieutenant Wood was directed to his condition—it was the opinion, however, of this represen-

tative of the United States, who had control of the prisoners, that he was shamming ; but his violence at length convinced even the skeptical Wood that his mind was disordered and that a longer imprisonment would be attended with permanent derangement. Mr. Haig was at length released, whether in the deranged condition of his mind the oath of allegiance was required of him I cannot say, but for many months after his release he was an inmate of the insane asylum at Mount Hope, Baltimore.



## CHAPTER II.

We were notified a day in advance of our removal to Fort Warren. On the day in question, after breakfast, we were locked in our rooms, and directions given us to pack our clothes and prepare for departure. The inmates of the different rooms were conducted through the entrance to a small steamboat, that was to convey us to Fort Hamilton.

After we reached Fort Hamilton, which was then, as now, under the command of Colonel Loomis, we were placed on a larger steamboat, called the steamer "Maine."

The North Carolina and political prisoners confined at this Fort, and who were to accompany us as fellow prisoners and fellow sufferers, caused an addition to our number of near seven hundred. The usual complement of a vessel of the size of the steamboat Maine, as I was informed by Captain Berry, an old and experienced seaman, was from three to four hundred; here were between eight and nine hundred men. Captain Berry had no hesitation to impart to me the very comfortable consolation, that from the crowded state of the vessel, if there was any thing of a blow we should all go to "kingdom come," and he clearly intimated that from the vessel the Government chartered for our conveyance, that the Government designed that mode of disposing of us.

On witnessing the great accession to our numbers, Mr. Denison, of Baltimore County, asked me if I had secured a state room. Looking at the dense throng on the boat, and the manifest impossibility of procuring sleeping quarters, I told him that I had bought many lottery tickets during my life, but had never been fortunate enough to draw a prize, so hopeless, from the number on board, did I deem my chance of securing a bed.

After the vessel had fairly gotten under way, raw pork and hard crackers were served to the prisoners.

My friend, Mr. J. H. Maddox, of St. Mary's County, Maryland, between five and six o'clock in the evening, told me by using due diligence and some enterprise we would be able to procure some supper by paying the sum of fifty cents. Accordingly Mr. Maddox, Mr. Austin Smith and myself, stationed ourselves near the cabin door, awaiting with interest and impatience the summons to supper; we found near a hundred half famished prisoners, as ourselves, casting wistful eyes upon the door. As I have always through life been a sufferer from backwardness and modesty, I determined that the possession of that virtue should not cost me the loss of my supper. As soon as the cabin door was opened I entered, seated myself at the table and enjoyed a supper, which I relished more from long ab-

stinence. After my supper I repaired to the first cabin, which I found densely crowded; Lieutenant Butt, of the Confederate Navy, took out his violin and played for us "Dixie," the chorus was taken up by all the prisoners who could sing, and I venture to assert that no Northern vessel ever resounded more cheerfully to the notes of this Southern song than on this night in October, 1861. The old timbers of the vessel resounded with the notes "I wish I was in Dixie," and doubtless many a poor prisoner, when he thought of Dixie, joined with earnestness in the wish which the words of the song convey. The effect on the spirits of the prisoners by the song of "Dixie" could not be conveyed by any language I could pen or give utterance to; here at least on the steamboat, buffeting the waves of the Atlantic, "our thoughts were as boundless and our home as free" as the currents of old ocean over which we were making our way.

Between eight and nine o'clock, the air in the first cabin, from the number there assembled, became to me insufferable—I determined to seek the second cabin, but that I found filled with North Carolina officers and other prisoners, and the space in that cabin was precious. The heat and air in both cabins being to me stifling and oppressive, I sought the deck of the boat, enveloped in my overcoat, I determined to strive to woo the embraces of somnus; I stretched myself on the deck of the vessel, gazed at the stars and listened to the waves of the ocean, which was to be my lullaby. The noise of the waves induced a sleep of about two hours, when I was awakened by a chilly and cold sensation; I determined to return to the cabin where I could get warm; as I was leaving the deck to return to the cabin I saw a recumbent figure, in a profound slumber; the wind was blowing fresh and cold; when I awakened the person who had attracted my attention, judge of my astonishment when I found the gentleman was Mr. T. Parkin Scott, of Baltimore. As the boat was tossing, caused by a heavy sea, I insisted on his rising and endeavoring to procure some more comfortable accommodation for the night.

Mr. Scott told me that the pent up air in the cabin had induced him to try and snatch some rest in the open air; he expressed himself satisfied with his nap, and did not seem to apprehend any ill effects from his slumber in the autumnal night air.

In company with Mr. Scott, I sought the first cabin; never did I before witness, and will I am satisfied never again witness such a condensed mass of humanity as there met my sight; every part of the spacious cabin was closely packed with human beings; every chair had its occupant; every lounge and table filled with the sleeping prisoners; every plank on the floor had its tenant, notwithstanding the floor was in a filthy

condition from the tobacco juice ejected upon it during the day. The men were so densely huddled up, packed and wedged together that I found it almost impossible to pass and descend to the second cabin. After I had succeeded with much ado in picking my way through the human beings lying in all postures, and strewn over the floor of the first cabin, I congratulated myself upon the feat which I had accomplished in penetrating the blockade of human beings in the first cabin. I am satisfied that the blockade of the Southern Ports with the boasted navy of the United States was never so effectual and efficient as in the cabins and hole of this steamer. I witnessed the same spectacle in the lower cabin as I had seen in the upper ; the hole of the vessel, which contained the North Carolina prisoners, was strictly guarded, and had I the disposition to have explored the hole of the vessel I would not have been permitted to do so.

On returning to the upper cabin I procured a chair from Mr. Austin Smith, and insisted on Mr. Scott seating himself, and endeavoring to obtain some sleep. Between three and four o'clock in the morning, the Pilot insisted upon my partaking a part of his coffee—a draught of coffee at that hour, exhausted from loss of sleep, was to me truly grateful.

About six o'clock the prisoners who had been so fortunate as to have gotten state rooms, vacated their beds, and wished to ascertain from their less fortunate brethren how they had passed the night. All the following day we were at sea, with only a single meal to divert the monotony of our life. About six o'clock in the evening, Fort Warren, that was to become our future home, appeared in sight. We were told that we had to spend this second night also on the vessel. This was to us a matter of regret and surprise ; it appears that Col. Dimmick had received no official notification of the large and numerous family for which he was suddenly required to provide. The boat anchored near the Fort—the prisoners were not to be landed until the next day. We therefore had another disagreeable night to spend on board. The prisoners who had spent the preceding night so miserably commenced about dark looking for some place where they could procure some sleep. Some of the prisoners who had state rooms very considerably insisted on vacating them for those who had had no sleep the night before. Col. Durrett, of Kentucky, insisted on my occupying his bed for at least three hours, when I was to be awakened, and could give it up to some other bedless prisoner. In that way I obtained some three hours sleep ; the balance of the night I set up. The cabins were in the same crowded condition, and presented the same appearance as the preceding night.

The next day we were marched into Fort Warren. After we had entered the enclosure, we were requested to stand in a row, the name of each prisoner was called, and the number of the

room to which he was assigned. I was assigned a room in the basement, with stone floor. Captain Tansill, who had been Captain of Marines on the U. S. frigate Congress, and who had resigned at the commencement of our national difficulties, Lieut. Wilson of the Marines, on same vessel, Lieutenants Claiborne and Cenas of the Navy, from Louisiana, Lieut. A. D. Wharton of Tennessee, Lieut. Butt of the Navy, from Virginia, Mr. Thomas Hall, Editor of the South, and myself were assigned and occupied the room above referred to.

There was not a particle of furniture in the room, except a stove—no chairs, no bedsteads, in a word, nothing. As our room was so comfortless, we ascended the stone steps of the area which surrounded our room until we reached the upper regions; there we found most of the prisoners in the same tired, hungry and exhausted condition as my room-mates and myself. Some were swearing and complaining of the quarters assigned them, others, and by far the largest number, clamoring for something to eat.

High above the din and noise, I recognized the voice of Mr. George W. Landing, who clamored and asked for even parched corn to stay the cravings of hunger. Attracted by his eloquence, quite a crowd of prisoners clustered around him, when he thus addressed them :

“Gentlemen :—The freemen of Worcester County first honored me with their confidence about fourteen years ago. I endeavored by my course in the Legislature to prove worthy of the confidence reposed in me. By repeated elections since they have given renewed marks of their appreciation of my value and fidelity as a representative. During my whole Legislative career I have always opposed the appointment of travelling Committees, as I never believed any good resulted therefrom, and that they were in a majority of cases a source of expense without a corresponding benefit. But gentlemen (here the speaker raised his voice, and with uplifted arm, declared with an asseveration) the present travelling Committee of the Legislature of 1861, of which I am an humble, reluctant and unwilling member, I shall depart from my usual Legislative course, and will go in for paying them liberal mileage and per diem for their valuable time consumed in inspecting the fortifications of the United States Government. I am free to say, gentlemen, that I was always keenly alive to legislative distinctions, but could I have foreseen what I have since undergone, all the temptations of Legislative honors would have never allured me from the banks of the Pocomoke, where I drew my first breath of life, and the murmur of whose waves will, I trust, sing my last requiem.”

About this time, the sight of an uncooked ham, which Col. Kane was carving on a small table not far off, and the sight of a barrel of crackers was too tempting a prospect for Mr. Land-

ing and his hearers to look upon; he abruptly closed his remarks, and was soon lost sight of in the hungry, impatient and jostling crowd.

After the hunger of the prisoners had been satisfied, we all, involuntarily, reflected on the comfortless prospect of spending the night. Towards evening, when I repaired to my room, I found my room-mates assembled, a fire in the stove, and three large gates as they appeared to me, but what were jail-beds as I was afterwards informed, two pieces of timber lying parallel with slats nailed transversely thereon. Those were the beds that we were to occupy until our iron bed-steads and bedding were sent us from Fort Lafayette; there were no blankets to place between our person and the slats, so that when we arose in the morning the flesh of those who occupied these beds presented the appearance of checker boards.

Messrs. Harrison, Wallis and Warfield, visited our room, and seeing how totally we were unprovided for spending the night, insisted on supplying us with some of their blankets.

Six of us occupied one part of the room, closely huddled and packed together. When I awakened in the morning, for I slept very soundly, having had but little sleep the two nights before, I found considerable soreness in all parts of my body, caused from the bed I occupied the night before.

Col. Dimmick, the Commandant of the Fort, did all in his power to render our condition more tolerable—he was a kind and good man, and was willing to extend to us every privilege that Government would allow.

This morning we breakfasted about 9 o'clock, the best breakfast I enjoyed since my imprisonment—the fare plain, but well cooked and cleanly served. We dined at 2 o'clock—the dinner was a manifest and decided improvement on our dinners at Fort Lafayette.

When we were about retiring, at 9 o'clock, Captain Tansill, the eldest of my room-mates, began very carefully to spread several large newspapers on the bare stone floor, stating that he was making his bed, averring that he could sleep better there than on the "damned grid-iron" he occupied the night before. We remonstrated with the Captain, but he still obstinately clung to his newspaper bed; he insisted the next morning that he had spent a more comfortable night than the first night, however "chacun a son gout," I preferred the grid-iron, notwithstanding the worthy Captain's encomiums on his newspaper bed on the naked floor.

The next morning Lieutenant Buel informed us that each prisoner would be allowed a sack to be filled with 13 pounds of straw, accordingly most of the prisoners shouldered their sacks, and soon a hundred or so was busily engaged at the straw pile in filling their sacks with the quota allowed by Government.

After the sack filling was gotten through with, every man shouldered his bed and walked.

This night, by placing our straw beds on the grid-iron bedsteads, was a great improvement in our sleeping arrangements—even Captain Tansill yielded his prejudice in favor of his newspaper couch and again consented to try the grid-iron bedstead, since he could be protected from immediate contact by the sacks of straw.

This night was a decided improvement on the preceding night. Several of my room-mates together with myself entered into a mess with some North Carolina officers; it was known as the North Carolina mess. We were permitted to draw our rations and have them cooked, and by each member paying about \$1.25 per week we were enabled to add to and improve our bill of fare considerably. Some privilege was extended to us almost every day, and our condition in every respect was improved and ameliorated; all the officers and men with whom we were thrown in contact were disposed to be obliging, civil and polite. We were permitted to keep our lights until ten o'clock, when sometimes, from inadvertence and thoughtlessness, we exceeded the hour for putting out the light, the Sergeant of the Guard would knock at the door and say, gentlemen, in accordance with my orders, it is after ten o'clock, I must request you to put out your lights; we always cheerfully obeyed, as the conduct of the officers and privates at Fort Warren was so entirely different and in striking contrast with the surly and repulsive manner of our treatment at Fort Lafayette.

Our beds and bedding from Fort Lafayette reached us when we were comparatively comfortable. There were arrivals more or less every day; the frequency ceased at length to create any sensation.

After the farce of an election had been enacted in November, 1861, and the State of Maryland sealed her loyalty to the Lincoln cause by a majority of twenty thousand, when it could have been increased by the same process as easy to forty thousand, when Governor Hicks, by proclamation, officially notified the province of Maryland that Mr. Lincoln's choice was to be their future Chief Magistrate, a Mr. Hayley, of N. Y., agent of Mr. Seward, visited the Fort, where he remained for some time. Upon his arrival a card was pasted up in the different passages explaining the cause of his visit, which was in substance, that he would wait on the prisoners at their different rooms and inquire of them whether they would take the oath to support the Administration at Washington unconditionally, by some called the oath of allegiance.

Mr. Hayley, thus accredited, spent some time at the Fort, industriously canvassing for Administration recruits. Every pri-

soner was individually canvassed, many of the prisoners gave their answers in writing, others, as myself, contented themselves with a simple refusal, and others allured by the prospects of release from imprisonment assented. The Kentucky prisoners, and I believe the Hatteras prisoners were canvassed. Among the prisoners captured at Hatteras Inlet were two colored men, they were, as I was reliably informed, waited on and urged by Mr. Seward's assiduous electioneering agent—the slave was first sent for, when the long oath was read to this most intelligent contraband, he stretched his mouth and showed his ivories, “did my young massa sign that paper?” No; but replies Mr. Hayley, you will be free by signing. “Well this darkey can't sign I spect, as how I'se a secesh nigger.”

The free negro expressed his desire to be exchanged with the Hatteras prisoners, but positively refused to take the oath of allegiance. There was no want of diligence and assiduity on the part of Mr. Hayley; I do not think, from what I witnessed of his untiring and unceasing exertions, that his mission terminated as he was lead to hope and expect. The refusal of the citizens of African descent to swear allegiance to the mildest and most beneficent Government on earth must have been to Mr. Hayley and his employees “the unkindest cut of all.”

After answering to our names at roll call in the evening, we were permitted to visit each other in our respective rooms in the same building until the hour for retiring.

During my residence at the Fort, I made the acquaintance of a gentleman from Virginia, a prisoner, in what category of prisoners he should be classed I do not choose to say, whether as a political prisoner or a prisoner of war. Sufficient for this, that he was a gentleman, modest, unassuming, and of more than ordinary intelligence.

When our casual acquaintance had ripened into friendship, we discussed with freedom and “abandon” the exciting and absorbing questions of the day. I once said to him, in our many colloquies, “My dear Virginia friend, your State, the Old Dominion, the mother of States, was culpable in the extreme from so long withholding her preponderating influence from a cause in which the fortunes of her younger and feebler sisters were embarked, and to her dilatory action is to be ascribed the subjugation of her twin sister, Maryland. What apology can you offer for her remissness? Was it because her present sons had forgotten the political teachings bequeathed them as legacies by Jefferson and Madison? The present Virginia race has not lost any of the lofty characteristics which belonged to and dignified their progenitors. It certainly could not have been because Virginia shrank from the initiative, and would have allowed her cause and the cause of the South to be fought by her younger and feebler sisters. The vacillating and hesitating course of

Virginia sealed the fate and fixed the status of my native State, Maryland." These were the words and this the language I used, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Listen to me my brother of Maryland before you condemn the mother of States. South Carolina, our sister, in point of strength and population numerically our inferior, yet profiting by the lessons of her foreseeing and sagacious son, Calhoun, was in political wisdom far in our advance. Strictly conforming, and never swerving from the doctrine taught and inculcated by Jefferson and Madison, never diverted from their lessons, never allured or seduced from the doctrine of States' Rights by all the jewels and gewgaws which the General Government could offer ; South Carolina was denounced and abused because of her political incorruptibility, and her insensibility to the attractive offerings of the Federal Government.

"Your State, Maryland, having the capital on her soil, could not resist the temptations to which, as a State, it was subjected, losing sight of its sovereignty—your State easily and readily yielded when her conquest was attempted." "But Maryland awaited with anxious expectation and impatience your motions," added I.

"Recollect," says my Virginia friend, "that to the custody of your State was bequeathed by our forefathers, the framers of the Constitution, the casket which contained our jewels, and to you it was entrusted, because placed on your soil, the Capital of the United States, which was the emblem and type of the individual sovereignty of each State ; and it was your duty never to allow the representative of any sectional party to seize on the emblem of over thirty States, and to use that common emblem of the powers of all, for the oppression of any.

"Maryland, from her geographical position, and from all the duties of patriotism and conviction of right, was placed in the advance ; but your State, my dear friend, shrank from the advance, fearful to incur the responsibilities of her position ; she shrank and succumbed to Federal power.

"Virginia boldly and defiantly accepted the gauntlet, and how she has suffered—witness her devastated fields and her ruined cities—it is easy to commit oneself to a sentiment and an opinion, when a vindication of that opinion is attended with no sacrifice and risk ; but would the citizens of your State, four-fifths of whom you assert are Southern men, be willing to be subjected to and undergo the same dreadful ordeal, through which my State has passed ? Would your citizens, from a conviction of political right, and from a sense of political duty, be willing that hostile armies should make your chief city or State the scene of war and blood ? If you say that you believe that your State would be prepared to undergo the same bloody ordeal, then I say the Confederate States would acknowledge Ma-



ryland as their sister, and clasp her to their heart of hearts. But, my friend, do you believe that a majority of your citizens would vote for their State joining the Southern Confederacy, if it is to be purchased at such a bloody price. True, there are many Maryland men, who with the valor characteristic of your State, have rendered valuable service on many a well contested and bloody field.

“By joining the fortunes of the Southern Confederacy, though they may have become aliens from their native State, yet they will be cherished in the grateful recollection of a free people, whose liberties they assisted to achieve.”

To this I replied, “my dear friend, as you have endeavored to vindicate your State, hear the defence of mine. The people of Maryland, though Southern to the core, are eminently a law-loving people. Maryland has always conformed to the Constitution of her own State, and never violated the compact which she entered into with her sister States. The Constitution of Maryland requires the Legislature to meet only once in two years, and to that clause and to that *alone* is to be ascribed our present false and enslaved condition. That clause, placed there by the framers of the Constitution, doubtless after mature deliberation, was for Maryland, truly a fatal clause.

“When in better times the Constitution of Maryland shall be remodelled, the framers profiting by the bitter experience of the past, will insert a clause requiring annual elections and annual sessions of the Legislature. Too much power under the present Constitution is vested in the Executive, hence our present melancholy and deplorable condition. You smile incredulously, when I say better times in Maryland; but notwithstanding your incredulity, the spirit of the seer is upon me—Maryland, though at this time blotted out of political existence, a mere cipher in the political world, has a future, and I predict for her a brilliant future, when she shall be disenthralled from the fetters with which she is now manacled. Maryland will some day, I trust not far distant, again assume her sovereignty, and with lofty part, bold front and proud crest, pointing to the many battle-fields stained with the blood of her sons, claim too that she shall be admitted in the Confederacy of her Southern sisters.

“No sir, at no time, at no period, could Maryland have joined the South, though panting to do so. As to what she has undergone and still suffers, see before you in this prison her chosen and trusted representatives. Yourself and prisoners from other Southern States can be exchanged—you have prospects of relief; we arrested in mere wantonness, will be retained so long as it may suit the whim and caprice of the Secretary of State. Tell me then that Maryland has not suffered. Your State has experienced all the calamities of war, but your citizens are free—

our citizens are enslaved not because they wanted the courage to strike the blow, or did not wish any part of the bloody carnival to be enacted on her soil,—but only because they are as helplessly confined as their imprisoned representatives are now held in this Fort.

“The Abolitionist Hicks not only used, but abused the power given him by the Constitution, though there was a clause there requiring him to convene the Legislature on any great public exigency and emergency. The Chief Magistrate of Maryland in this violated the Constitution of his State and his oath of office. The citizens from all quarters of the State were petitioning and imploring him to convene the Legislature, but in vain; the citizens of the State remained quiet, and fulfilled their constitutional obligations as citizens, while their Executive was violating his. At length, on the 19th day of April, 1861, at the sight of Northern soldiers passing through Baltimore to subjugate the South, the pent up fury of her citizens could not be restrained, it was then in the streets of Baltimore that the blow was struck, her streets were stained with as good Southern blood as ever coursed through the veins of any Southern man, I care not from what section he comes. It will be from the streets of Baltimore that the future historian will date the war of Southern independence.

“Hicks was in Baltimore on that day—his cowardly soul quailed, and in presence of the citizens of Baltimore, in Monument Square, assembled to deliberate upon the bloody scenes that had been enacted that day, in language heard by too many hearers, made the declaration about the sacrifice of his right arm and a great deal of similar high falutin school boy rhetoric.

“The audience after his earnest declarations, were calmed. Despising the character of the man, I had no confidence in his vapid declarations, believing that they were only induced by a desire to save his own cowardly carcass. I knew well that he would pursue an entirely opposite course when he was assured that his master, Lincoln, had a sufficient number of bayonets to protect him. He did convene the Legislature, however, and how he has reconciled himself to his master at Washington for convening an Assembly that he knew to be disloyal. Why did this man Hicks convene a Legislature which he believed was disloyal? Was that not a violation of good faith on his part with his master Lincoln? Did he not by that act forfeit the consideration paid him for his former course. I judge, however, that master and servant have long since been reconciled; the servant manifesting contrition, promising to atone through his whole Senatorial career for the mistake he had made in convening the disloyal Legislature.

“After the Legislature had been in session about a week in Frederick, an Abolition member asked me if I knew what the

Legislature had met for. I replied by asking him the question what Hicks convened it for—he certainly did not think that the Legislature would sanction the ratification of the infamous sale of the State made by him to the Abolition Government at Washington.

“This was another difficulty, my friend, which Maryland had to encounter—a false and traitorous Executive—thus environed, thus surrounded, how then could Maryland act. Your State, Virginia, even then had not decided upon her course; how then can Maryland be reproached.

“I trust, my dear sir, my vindication of Maryland is ample, and that her Legislature thus fettered by enemies without and traitors within, could do nothing but indignantly remonstrate against their tyrants and oppressors.”

My readers must pardon me for this digression from my narrative of prison life, as a citizen of Maryland, I was anxious to vindicate as well as I was able the course pursued by our Legislature, though I had not, as I informed my Virginia friend, either the vanity or egotism to suppose that I could equal the vindication which had been prepared by S. Teackle Wallis, in the Report of the Committee on Federal Relations, delivered in the Legislature at its August session in the year 1861, the consideration of which I commended to his careful study as containing an ample, eloquent and truthful vindication of the course pursued by the Legislature of Maryland at their session in the year 1861.

By this time we had become thoroughly accustomed to and familiar with the routine of prison life—to the kindness of Colonel Dimmick and his officers we were much indebted, and I do but an act of justice when I reiterate that every privilege and indulgence was accorded to us, consistent with his power as an officer of the United States army.

Our life now at Fort Warren was as pleasant as prison life could possibly be, but still it was irksome in the extreme, the same dull unvaried round, being a citizen too of what is termed in Government parlance, a citizen of a loyal State, there was no period to which we could look forward to the determination of our imprisonment. Prisoners of war could be exchanged, but our imprisonment was only to terminate with the cessation of hostilities.

I would pace the passage adjoining my room for hours, the thoughts of home, wife and children, no period when I could expect release, these reflections almost maddened me, and circumstanced as I was, I have since thought that it was only a kind Providence that saved me from insanity. When I indulged in reflections about home and all its endearments, it nearly crazed me.

Sometime in December, the monotony of our prison life was

disturbed and varied by the announcement of the Capture of Messrs. Slidell and Mason, Ministers of the Confederate States, with their Secretaries, Messrs. Eustis and McFarland ; it was stated by the papers that these gentlemen were to be imprisoned at Fort Warren ; their arrival was looked for with much interest.

In conversation with one of my fellow prisoners, who seemed to think that the term of imprisonment of these gentlemen would be indefinite, I said, give yourself no uneasiness about the imprisonment of Messrs. Slidell and Mason, they will be released as soon as the news reaches Europe and is there canvassed. I only wish that the prospect of our release was as speedy and as certain as that of these two ambassadors.

The Government will never release them, cried one, see the proceedings of Northern Legislatures, all endorsing the arrests and approving the conduct of Wilkes. It is impossible, the administration are too far committed, they cannot recede. Wait and see ; they will recede I feel assured ; they are valiant in dealing with the subjugated State of Maryland, but the craven spirits of our rulers would recoil at a collision with a power like England. In a few weeks, I have no doubt, after some diplomatic pow wowing, Messrs. Slidell and Mason will be released, and both gentlemen would be furnished by the valorous Government at Washington with the usual Ministerial outfit, should England think proper to demand it. It was on Sunday that Messrs. Slidell, Mason, Eustis and McFarland, entered the Fort attended by several naval officers. Who is that naval officer? I asked of a friend standing near me. That is Lieutenant Fairfax, of Virginia, who superintended the arrest of Messrs. Slidell and Mason. A Virginia officer conducted the arrest, I added with some surprise ; yes sir, my friend added, a Virginia officer made the arrest.

Lieutenant Fairfax is one among the few Virginia gentlemen who take a strictly commercial view of life ; it was more remunerative for Lieutenant Fairfax to serve the Government than his State. I wonder if this commercial view of life has not a good deal to do with the war, and whether it will not contribute towards its prolongation. The arrest of Messrs. Slidell and Mason, the mode of their arrest, the action of England, were all fruitful themes for discussion and speculation for many days. About this time we lost another room mate, Lieutenant Cenas. Lieutenant Butt having been exchanged some weeks before. Our room had now but six left, with a very slender hope on the part of any of us of a further reduction in the number. When I parted with Lieutenant Cenas, to whom I had become much attached, I did not suppose that it would be my turn next. To my surprise, a few days before Christmas I was requested by Lieutenant Buell to go to Col. Dimmick's room, as he had a com-

munication to make me. When I entered the Colonel's room he handed me a letter to read ; It was a letter from the Secretary of State addressed to Col. Dimmick, authorizing him to release me for the space of thirty days, provided I would agree to report myself at Fort Warren, when the time designated should expire. I readily agreed to accept the terms prescribed, as I was very anxious to see my wife and children, from whom I had been so long absent.

The next day, after bidding my fellow prisoners adieu, I left for Boston. I desired the Captain of the boat to direct me to the hotel kept by Mr. Hall ; this gentleman did the washing of the prisoners at the Fort, and I was to get such of my linen as had not been delivered.

After I had received my clothes and settled for the washing, I was urged to remain until the next day—I was asked if this was the first time I was ever in Boston ; I replied it was, and mentally resolved it should be my last. I was told that there were many objects of interest in Boston, and urged to defer my departure at least until the next day.

I was proof against all the tempting pictures drawn by my would-be cicerone of Fanuell Hall, Bunker Hill, &c. Many persons came in the Hotel, and I soon found that I was the special object of curiosity. I desired a waiter to call a hack, and was driven to the cars. I found the cars would not leave for near an hour. I seated myself in an empty car—I never was so anxious in my life to be alone—my feelings were most singular and indescribable—I at times could scarcely realize that I was again free.

Soon the car in which I was seated began to fill up—the seat which I occupied was at one extreme of the car—the train moved—the lamps were lighted—I leaned my head on the back part of the seat in front of me. The cars were dimly lighted—intensely cold out, but warm and comfortable within—I soon fell asleep and was dreaming about the Fort of which I was so recently an inmate. I was roused suddenly from my sleep by a loud, coarse voice—when I looked up, I was accosted by a man between sixty and seventy years of age, sitting some three or four feet in front of me—say, says he, you are the man that was released from Fort Warren to-day, and then added, Government is entirely too mild—they let you all off, when you take the oath of allegiance—as for myself, I would not believe any of you on oath. When he found that he had fixed my attention, he talked with so much rapidity and so volubly, that for some minutes, I had no opportunity to answer his many questions. At length, after repeating many times that he would not believe me or any one in Fort Warren on oath, I replied to him that his opinion was to me a matter of most perfect indifference, as it was also to the prisoners at the Fort. That with

reference to the oath of allegiance, as I had never taken it, I could not therefore violate it. How did you get out then? He fiercely asked. I have a parole for thirty days to go to Baltimore to see my family, when it expires I am to return. The Government was foolish in trusting your word of honor. I suppose you judge others by yourself, because you would be faithless to an obligation thus given—I must demur to your judging me by your standard of morality, as I believe it is very low. There was a young lady sitting near him, who seemed to be striving to check him, but without effect. The Government ought to hang you all, political prisoners, and prisoners of war too. Your prisoners of war confined in Richmond, would thank you for your very humane wish, for there is a gentleman, of whom you have doubtless heard by the name of Jefferson Davis, who would, in the event of your Government adopting your kind and very humane suggestion to hang, adopt at once the lex talionis. I believe your Government had decided to hang certain privateers, but as I saw at Fort Warren to-day several of the privateers with necks still unbroken, I presume your Government, for reasons best known to themselves, concluded to reconsider their determination. My reply seemed to exasperate him still more, he attempted to rise, the young lady interposed and said, father you forced this conversation on the gentleman; it was not of his seeking. The daughter addressing me, do not mind father, he is old, and becomes much excited on the subject of the rebellion. I bowed, at the same time said, Miss I have for four months been confined in Government prisons, I think that I have greater cause for undue excitement than your father. The attention of all the passengers in the cars was attracted to our conversation by his loud voice and violent manner. His daughter succeeded in calming the old man down, and he had no more to say, except some inaudible mutterings and portentous shakes of the head.

About fifteen minutes after this conversation, a lady and gentleman sitting near me said to me in subdued tones, we are from Philadelphia; we agree with you sir in the opinions you expressed, but is it not imprudent to talk in so outspoken a manner? I smiled, and said I had entered into no agreement to withhold an expression of opinion when provoked, as it was only a few minutes since. I reached Baltimore on the 24th of December, 1861, the day before Christmas.

For several days after my return I could scarcely realize my liberty—in all my movements I would look around for guards and sentries as in the days of my imprisonment.

As my thirty days were drawing to a close, Gen. Dix notified me that my parole was extended for sixty days longer, and at the end of that time to report to him. When the sixty days expired, then it was extended a week, until at length I asked that

a final disposition should be made of my case. I was then informed that there was no necessity of my reporting any farther, that when Government wanted me they would send for me. They have ample means of making their mandates respected in the State of Maryland, if their authority extends in no other Southern State.

I kept no diary while in the different Forts, but the different events that I have described in this narrative are as vividly and indelibly impressed on my memory as if the event occurred only yesterday.

I have endeavored to make this a true and simple narrative of the life of a prisoner, who was compelled from necessity to accept the hospitalities of the United States Government. If this simple recital hath no other merit, it will have that of truth to recommend it.

71.2009.084.08461